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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

JCSM-687-67

9 December 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Military Operating Authorities During  
Holiday Standdowns for Christmas 1967 and  
New Year's and Tet 1968 (U)

1. (U) Reference is made to:

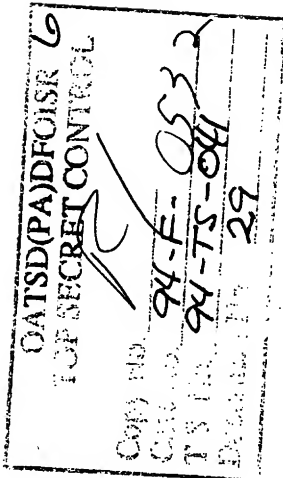
a. American Embassy, Saigon, message to State, 11714/221700Z November 1967, JCS IN 32691, in which Ambassador Locke presented the GVN position for holiday standdown periods of 36-36-72 hours and recommended that, if acceptable from a military standpoint, the proposal be accepted.

b. Joint State/Defense message to American Embassy, Saigon, 74877, 260205Z November 1967, JCS IN 38981, in which the Secretaries of State and Defense desired to limit standdown periods to 24-24-48 hours and provided guidance for the Ambassador in his negotiations with the Government of Vietnam and the Seven-Nation Ambassadors.

c. JCSM-567-67, dated 23 October 1967, subject: "Holiday Standdowns in Vietnam (U)," in which the Joint Chiefs of Staff opposed any holiday standdowns and further opposed a total freeze on logistics, force repositioning, and rotation and replacement of personnel.

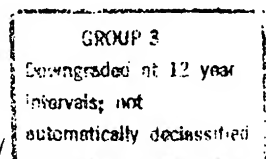
d. JCS message to CINCPAC and CINCSAC, 3879/281441Z April 1967, which provided the military instructions to be followed during the standdown for Buddha's birthday on 23 May 1967.

2. (U) The Joint Chiefs of Staff note that the Government has made a decision to institute standdowns of military activity of 24 hours at Christmas and New Year's and 48 hours at Tet.



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Declassified by Joint Staff  
Date 31 Oct 94  
701A 4025  
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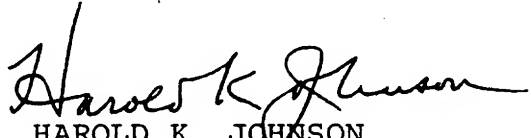
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~~TOP SECRET~~

In the past, the enemy has demonstrated to our detriment his ability to capitalize on military standdowns; therefore, the rules of engagement promulgated last year should be modified in accordance with the draft message contained in the Appendix hereto.

3. (U) The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend your approval of the attached draft message.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

  
HAROLD K. JOHNSON  
Acting Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachment

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~~TOP SECRET~~

APPENDIX

DRAFT

IMMEDIATE  
PRIORITY

FROM: JCS

TO: CINCPAC  
CINCSAC

INFO: COMUSMACV  
AMEMB SAIGON  
AMEMB VIENTIANE  
AMEMB BANGKOK  
WHITE HOUSE  
STATE DEPT

DISTRIBUTION:

CJCS DIA  
DJS J-3  
SJCS J-4  
CSA J-5  
CNO  
CSAF  
CMC  
SECDEF  
DEPSECDEF  
ASD/ISA  
ASD/PA

TOP SECRET JCS

JCS send.

Subj: Military Operating Authorities During Holiday  
Standdown for Christmas 1967 and New Year's and  
Tet 1968 (U)

1. (1) Following instructions will govern military operations in SEA during any agreed upon holiday standdown for Christmas 1967 and New Year's and Tet 1968. Exact dates and times will be promulgated when firm.
  - a. In SVN
    - (1) Initiate no military offensive operations except in response to:
      - (a) Enemy initiatives endangering the safety of US/RVN/PWMA forces.
      - (b) Significant enemy resupply or infiltration into the southern part of the DMZ and the area immediately south thereof.
      - (c) Major enemy resupply activities other than in subpara 1a(1)(b), above, which fulfill any of the following criteria:

~~TOP SECRET~~  
JCSM-687-67

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1. Are in such proximity to friendly units 1  
and/or installations as to constitute a direct 2  
threat to friendly forces. 3

2. Are taking place in a well-known established 4  
enemy base area. 5

3. In other locations, involve supplies in 6  
quantities sufficient to indicate major resupply 7  
operations. 8

(2) CINCPAC is authorized to react to the above 9  
enemy actions in accordance with his existing 10  
authorities. Report actions taken under this 11  
authority immediately to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. 12

(3) Assume full alert posture and continue all 13  
security precautions, to include patrol activity. 14  
Be prepared with ready reaction forces to 15  
respond to any VC/NVA initiative. 16

(4) Forces in contact with VC/NVA forces will 17  
not break contact unless VC/NVA effort to withdraw 18  
is clearly evident or until the operation concerned 19  
is otherwise concluded. 20

(5) Continue MARKET TIME and GAME WARDEN. 21

(6) Conduct intensified aerial reconnaissance 22  
throughout period, and continue search and rescue 23  
operations as required. 24

(7) If deemed necessary for security of 25  
US/RVN/PWMA forces, appropriate air and/or naval 26  
operations are authorized in support of the above 27  
operations. For this purpose, ARC LIGHT may be 28  
requested through normal channels. 29

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~~TOP SECRET~~

(8) Operations conducted pursuant to foregoing will 1  
avoid, whenever possible, hamlets and villages in order 2  
to minimize impact on civilian population. 3

b. In NVN 4

(1) Suspend normal armed reconnaissance, air strikes, 5  
and SEA DRAGON operations during period. 6

(2) South of 20°N latitude, CINCPAC may authorize 7  
SEA DRAGON operations, air strikes, and artillery fire 8  
against observed substantial military resupply and 9  
against any activities that pose a direct threat to 10  
friendly forces. SEA DRAGON ships will not deliver 11  
fire against fixed shore targets except in self- 12  
defense. 13

(3) North of 20°N latitude, CINCPAC may authorize 14  
air strikes against any targets that pose an immediate 15  
and direct threat to our forces, such as movement of 16  
SAMs to extend additional SAM defenses south of 20°N 17  
latitude. 18

(4) Conduct intensified aerial reconnaissance and 19  
continue search and rescue operations as required. 20

(5) High-priority FRANTIC GOAT operations may be 21  
conducted at discretion of CINCPAC. 22

(6) Report immediately to the Joint Chiefs of Staff 23  
results of any reconnaissance which discloses substantial 24  
military resupply activity in NVN and any actions taken 25  
under the authorities of subparagraph 1b(2) or (3) above. 26

2. ~~(b)~~ Continue normal operations in Laos and Cambodia. 27

3. ~~(c)~~ US commanders, for the safety of their forces, have 28  
full authority to act to protect them, including reinstitution 29  
as necessary of any military actions suspended by these 30  
instructions. 31

4. ~~(d)~~ Report fully and immediately on VC/NVA hostile 32  
acts during period. 33

~~TOP SECRET~~

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~~TOP SECRET~~

5. (C) Resume all normal operations at conclusion of each 1  
period. 2

6. (C) Be prepared to resume all normal operations at any 3  
time, without delay, during the standdown period, should enemy 4  
initiated attacks and/or incidents reach such proportions as 5  
to cause the RVN, United States, and their allies to terminate 6  
the standdown for cause. 7

7. (C) Coordinate any public comment relating to these 8  
instructions with US Ambassador, Saigon. GP-3 9

WRITER:

Captain W. L. Spann, USN  
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